



**END CHILD  
POVERTY**  
GLOBAL COALITION

Voluntary National Reviews for the Sustainable Development Goals:  
**ARE COUNTRIES COMMITTED TO ENDING  
CHILD POVERTY BY 2030?**

A review of VNR reports from 2017 to 2021

Special thanks to Ben Liu, independent consultant, who led the development of this brief on behalf of the Coalition, with input and guidance from Lilei Chow (Save the Children), Maya Evans (OPHI), Olivier Thevenon (OECD), Richard Morgan (Nutrition International), Arellys Bellorini and Yukiko Yamada Morovic (World Vision International), Silvia Paruzzolo (Save the Children), Enkhzul Altangerel, Sola Engilbertsdottir and David Stewart (UNICEF).





# Contents

Voluntary National Reviews for the Sustainable Development Goals:

## Are countries committed to ending child poverty by 2030?

A review of VNR reports from 2017 to 2021

1. Introduction .....	4
2. Are countries committed to ending child poverty? What do the VNRs reveal? .....	5
3. Countries reporting on monetary child poverty .....	6
4. Countries reporting on multidimensional child poverty....	8
5. Countries reporting on policies and programmes addressing child poverty .....	10
Building and expanding child-sensitive social protection systems .....	10
Improving access, quality and utilization of public services by the poorest .....	11
Prioritizing child poverty in national development plans and strategies.....	12
6. COVID-19 and child poverty .....	13
7. The SDG Global Database and regional commitments.....	12
8. Conclusion and way forward .....	14
Global Coalition to End Child Poverty key asks: .....	15
9. Annex 1 - Country reporting on child poverty in their VNRs (2017-2021).....	17
10. Annex 2 - Methodological note .....	21

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Ending poverty in all its forms for everyone, including for children - is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015 by the Member States of the United Nations. The 2030 Agenda provides a clear framework for action: Countries must eradicate extreme child poverty by 2030 as internationally defined (PPP \$1.90) and halve the number of children living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions. The year 2021 marked the opening of the [Decade of Action](#) to accelerate solutions to achieve these ambitious goals. However, the COVID-19 crisis has impacted progress in the reduction of child poverty (approximately 150 million additional children were pushed into multidimensional poverty by the end of 2020), it has also brought to light the urgency for governments to adopt long-term policy and programmatic actions to reduce child poverty. Governments must take concerted actions to prevent this pandemic from turning into a child poverty crisis, through strengthening social protection systems and social services.

The [Global Coalition to End Child Poverty \(the Coalition\)](#), a 20+ member partnership, works to support national processes in achieving the SDG targets related to ending child poverty. The Coalition's Guide [A World Free from Child Poverty](#), sets out a practical agenda for mobilizing action to end child poverty nationally, regionally and globally. This agenda includes supporting countries in routinely measuring monetary and multidimensional child poverty and addressing it through policies, programmes and budgets.

To monitor and assess national progress on the SDGs, each year a select number of countries

present their [Voluntary National Reviews \(VNRs\)](#) to the United Nations [High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\)](#). This process enables countries to take stock of their achievements and challenges, share lessons learned and identify actions to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNRs are important as they are a key tool for accountability for the SDGs, both at the national and global level. Among the principles guiding the reviews are that they must be substantive, and knowledge-based, with a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind. To date, over 160 countries have presented their VNRs at the UN, with some countries having presented their VNR two or more times.

The VNRs are a key tool for accountability for the SDGs; they are the main mechanism for tracking progress on the SDGs at the national level and reporting on it at the global level.

One way to gauge progress on SDG implementation is to survey the data and the narrative content that countries present in their VNRs. This Coalition brief is the third annual analysis of the VNRs from a child poverty perspective, looking at how countries mention and discuss their efforts to end child poverty, through measurement and policies. Our assessment complements several other systematic efforts to assess VNRs, conducted by various UN agencies, academia, civil society etc. This analysis builds upon last year's brief<sup>1</sup> developed by the Coalition, which reviewed VNRs from 2017 to 2020. This year's analysis is based on the 2021 VNRs.

1 <http://www.endchildhoodpoverty.org/publications-feed/2020/10/17/briefing-paper>



## 2. ARE COUNTRIES COMMITTED TO ENDING CHILD POVERTY? WHAT DO THE VNRs REVEAL?

At the HLPF 2021, 42 countries carried out and presented VNRs of their implementation of the 2030 Agenda<sup>2</sup>.

The number of countries reporting on monetary child poverty increased slightly in 2021, compared to 2020.

The theme of this year's HLPF was "Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development". This theme highlights the urgent needs for a transformative recovery from COVID-19 pandemic in the context of accelerated efforts to deliver the 2030 Agenda and SDGs

during the Decade of Action. SDG 1 on ending poverty was among the thematic goals that was discussed in 2021.

Among the 40 VNR reports reviewed in 2021 (40 out of 42 countries uploaded a report available for analysis), 14 countries reported on monetary child poverty, 5 on multidimensional child poverty, and 31 outlined efforts to address child poverty through policies, programmes and/or budgets.

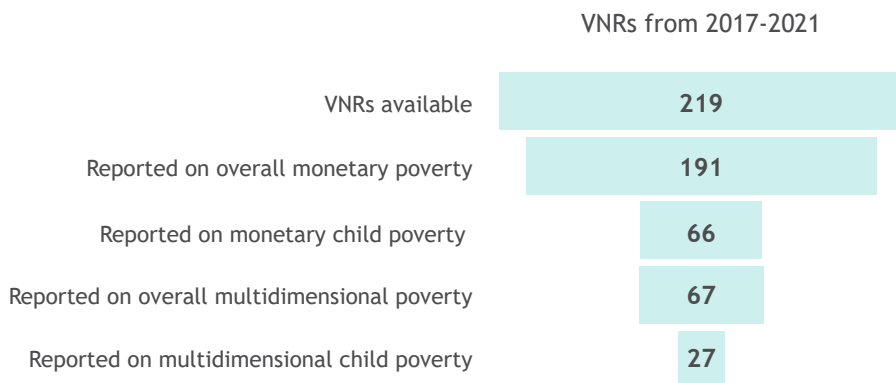
Looking at the period 2017 to 2021, there are 219 available VNR reports (some countries have presented their VNR more than one time) and out of them: 191 have reported on national monetary poverty, 66 on monetary child poverty, 67 on national multidimensional poverty and 27 on multidimensional child poverty (figure 1).

The findings presented in this brief are only based on VNR analysis and the UN [SDG Global Database](#). There are countries measuring child poverty and/or that have in place policies and programmes to address child poverty, but have not reflected this in their VNRs, and consequently these efforts are not reflected in this brief. As the scope of the analysis is the VNRs, it only provides information on stated policy positions and priorities. This brief does not constitute an evaluation or an assessment of these policies or priorities.

---

<sup>2</sup> Only 40 VNR reports are available online. The analysis doesn't include Bahamas and Guatemala. The 40 countries included in this review are: Afghanistan, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Chad, China, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Paraguay, Qatar, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay and Zimbabwe.

Figure 1



Overall, since 2017 the reports capture child poverty in a diverse way, from acknowledging children as a group particularly vulnerable to poverty, to highlighting policies addressing child poverty or showcasing national development frameworks and strategies which incorporate child poverty. The 2021 reports also highlighted the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, and the measures being put in place to respond to the health and socio-economic impacts. However, children living

in poverty still received limited attention in these discussions.

If we use Voluntary National Reviews as a measurement for countries' commitment to address child poverty, it is fair to conclude that progress is being made. However, there are still large gaps for achieving the 2030 Agenda - and the number of countries providing monetary and multidimensional child poverty estimates, an SDG requirement, are far too few.

### 3. COUNTRIES REPORTING ON MONETARY CHILD POVERTY

The first step to address child poverty is to provide an accurate and consistent measurement of child poverty. SDG indicator 1.2.1 focuses on the proportion of the population living below the national poverty line disaggregated by sex and age.

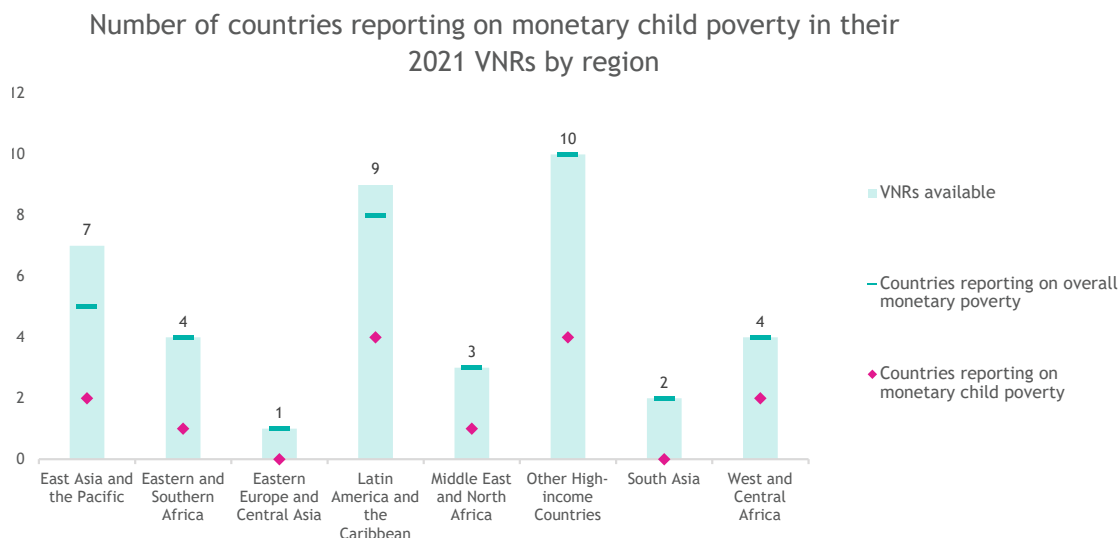
This year, a slightly higher number of countries reported on the monetary child poverty rates compared to last year, with more countries reporting on the national

monetary poverty rates among the population generally. Among the 40 VNR reports, 14 of them explicitly reference the monetary poverty rate for children, compared to 11 out of 45 reports last year<sup>3</sup>. The monetary child poverty rate is presented through different age groupings (e.g. 0-17 and 0-14 years old) and use either national or international criteria, such as the absolute poverty line, a relative poverty line, an extreme poverty line and/or the at risk of poverty rate.

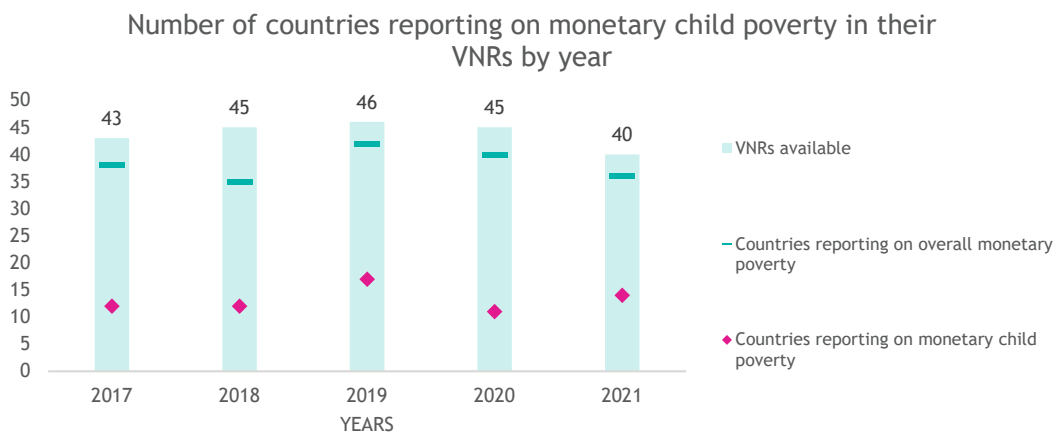
<sup>3</sup> The 14 countries include Niger, which reports the poverty rate for the population under the age of 25.



**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**



Among the countries mentioning monetary child poverty, many discussed their efforts to strengthen **data collection approaches** and monitoring mechanisms to track child poverty. Specifically:

- **Cabo Verde** reported not only on the poverty rate for different child age groups, ranging from 0 to 4, 5 to 9 and 10 to 14, but also disaggregated this data by sex. The results show that the incidence of

poverty is higher among male than female children across most of the age groups.

- **Indonesia** adopted a microsimulation method to project the child poverty rate in 2021 and analyzed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with or without the provision of social protection programmes. It also provided an estimate of the child vulnerability rate (defined as children living above the poverty line but less than 1.5 times above the poverty line). Indonesia has been monitoring the poverty level among children twice a year since 2015. In addition, it disaggregates this data annually for different age groups, including children (0-17 years old), adolescents (10-19 years old) and youth (16-30 years old).
- **Japan** has established various child poverty-related indicators in their “General Principles of Policy on Child Poverty” (launched in 2019), and initiated the Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions, which tracks not only the child poverty rate, but also poverty rates among single-parent families and income disparity for households with children.
- In addition to noting the child poverty rate at the national level, **Lao PDR** introduced a double system which tracks poverty prevalence for all households in any given village. The first tracking system is based on the household survey conducted every five years and is based on international standards of poverty. The second is an innovative home-grown system that

collects administrative data on income and access to basic services at the household level.

- **Spain** has monitored the measurement of AROPE (At Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion) since 2005, and emphasized in their 2021 VNR that the AROPE rate for children in Spain has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic while most European Union countries have managed to reduce this rate compared to pre-crisis values.

It is worth noting that instead of highlighting the specific monetary child poverty rates, some countries tracked trends in child poverty through other approaches. For instance, Malaysia noted the poverty rate for poor households with children, namely the B40 (Bottom 40% based on income) families. It also disaggregated this data based on number of children in the household. Denmark set a goal to introduce a new national poverty line, as a step in the direction towards eradicating child poverty and achieving SDG target 1.2. This demonstrates commitment to routinizing and institutionalizing the measurement of child poverty.

As in previous years, this year’s analysis reveals that although there is an increase in countries reporting on monetary child poverty - the fact remains that most countries still do not report on this important issue. As we approach the end of the first year of the Decade of Action to deliver the 2030 Agenda, only approximately one third of countries are reporting on their baseline and progress on monetary child poverty targets.





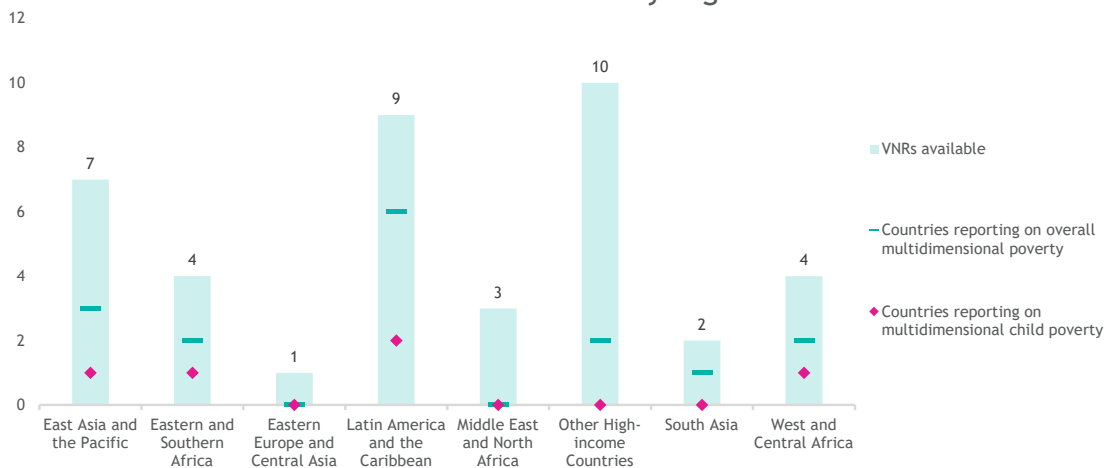
## 4. COUNTRIES REPORTING ON MULTIDIMENSIONAL CHILD POVERTY

Poverty is multifaceted and cannot be captured solely through income and consumption measurements. To understand the extent of poverty, it is necessary to assess the multiple and overlapping deprivations people face in their daily lives, which affect, for example, their health, nutrition,

education and living standards. Countries have committed to SDG target 1.2 which seeks to “reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions”.

Figure 4

Number of countries reporting on multidimensional child poverty in their 2021 VNRs by region



Of the 40 VNR countries reviewed **only 5 countries provided multidimensional poverty data on children** (Angola, Lao PDR, Mexico, Paraguay, Sierra Leone), examples of which are outlined below:

- Angola** has adopted the Angola Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) as the national index to measure multidimensional poverty, which includes 16 indicators in the dimensions of education, health, employment, and quality of life. In the VNR report, Angola disaggregated this data by five age groups, including two for children, which are ages 0 to 9, and 10 to 17. With the ambition to build MPI as a key policy tool, Angola is committed to conducting new rounds of household surveys to monitor and update multidimensional child poverty estimates.
- Mexico** estimates the multidimensional child poverty rate once every two years, based on several national surveys, including information from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), National Household Income and

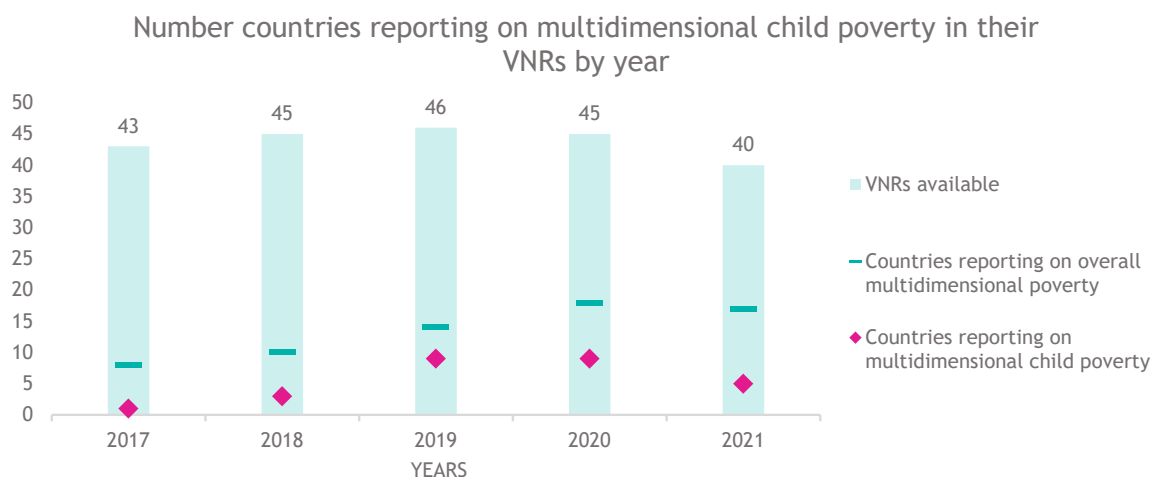
Expenditure Survey (ENIGH) and the Statistical Model for Continuity (MEC).

- **Paraguay** has recently adopted the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) as a complementary measurement to the national monetary poverty measurement, a process which started in 2018. This measurement captures deprivations in four dimensions using 15 indicators. The process of building the MPI was participatory with technical consultations among governmental sectors, research institutes and international organizations.

There is disaggregated data from MPIs for households with and without school-age children, showcasing that children and adolescents were greatly affected by the mobility restrictions imposed during the pandemic.

- **Sierra Leone** conducted a multidimensional child poverty analysis in 2019 and, unlike previous estimates based on the census, the new study was conducted with newly collected data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS).

Figure 5



However, as with monetary child poverty estimates, these good practices reporting on measuring multidimensional child poverty are extremely few and far between. While countries' focus on national multidimensional poverty among the general population remains

more or less the same, very low number of countries mentioning multidimensional child poverty rates in their VNRs remains a concern (figure 5). It is an SDG requirement for all countries to measure and monitor multidimensional child poverty.



## 5. COUNTRIES REPORTING ON POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES ADDRESSING CHILD POVERTY

Turning SDG promises into real results for children requires significant national attention including a comprehensive package of national policies and programmes and accompanying action plans and budgets for implementation. SDG target 1.3 recognizes the importance of social protection systems and floors in reducing poverty for everyone, including children, and SDG target 1.4 highlights the importance of access of people and families who are poor to essential basic services. Furthermore, SDG target 1.b.1 is important in this regard, as it specifies the *proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups*.

Among the 40 VNR countries reviewed 31 mentioned their efforts to tackle child poverty through various policy and/or sector-specific actions. These measures are broadly divided into the following categories: Building and expanding child-sensitive social protection systems; improving access, quality, and utilization of public services by people and families who are poor; and, prioritizing child poverty in national development plans and strategies.

### **Building and expanding child-sensitive social protection systems**

Government social protection schemes, when targeted at children and their caregivers, enable families to protect their children from monetary poverty and other deprivations they face throughout their life course. Positively, efforts in building and expanding child-sensitive social protection systems were among the most common country-level

responses to child poverty highlighted in the VNRs - in particular, the expansion of cash transfers targeted towards poor and vulnerable families with children.

- **Angola** discussed the APROSOC project (Support to Social Protection in Angola), which supports people in social vulnerability, such as, women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.
- **Azerbaijan** highlighted the Targeted State Social Assistance (TSSA) programme, which aims to provide financial assistance to low-income families. In 2020, 54% of family members receiving TSSA were children. The government also established the State Social Protection Fund that targets families with children. The allowance provided by the Fund has been significantly increased for guardians (caretakers) of orphans, children deprived of parental care, women with more than five children, and other vulnerable groups.
- In **Germany**, a supplementary child allowance scheme was re-introduced in 2019 by the Strong Families Act. The education package scheme was also improved, which abolished the parental financial contribution to the costs of school transport and communal lunches in schools, daycare centres and childcare services.
- In **Indonesia**, a locally funded sub-national social protection programme (Geunaseh) was launched with the aim of meeting poor children's nutritional needs and avoid potential long-term health problems, by providing cash transfers to households with children aged up to 6 years old. In

addition, the conditional cash transfer programme - Family of Hope Program (PKH) has enhanced investment in human development.

- **Namibia** passed the Social Protection Policy in 2021. The coverage rate of the main social grants for the same period increased as the child grant coverage increased from 60% to 66%.
- **Thailand** has advanced poverty eradication efforts, including through cash transfers for children. Key measures include financial assistance for newborn children in impoverished households, state welfare registration, and financial assistance for students from poorer households. Existing projects have also been expanded, for example assistance for children in poor households has expanded coverage from children 0-3 years to children aged 0-6 years. The range of criteria for those eligible to receive state welfare has also been widened.
- **Tunisia** emphasized its new law that guarantees the rights of people living in poverty, noting the Amen social programme, which consists of a monthly allowance for children aged 0-18 years and financial assistance to support expenses relating to the start of the school year. Guided by the framework of Amen, several governmental institutions launched programmes for the benefit of poor and vulnerable children. For instance, the Ministry of Education introduced the school meals programme for children in low-income families, and the Ministry of Women, Family, Children and Seniors initiated the project of social inclusion, for kids in poor families and those without family support in kindergartens.

In addition to social assistance measures, several countries emphasized labor market policies to support families and children living in and/or vulnerable to poverty. For instance:

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, **Cyprus** rolled out the granting of “Special Absence Leave” to parents working in the private and public sector for the care of children up to 15 years of age, due to the suspension of the operation of schools, nurseries, and childcare centres.
- In addition to providing targeted support for lower-income families with children, **Thailand** has implemented measures to promote women’s employment, including the creation of early childcare centres for children under the age of 3, promotion of paternity leave for men, and the expansion of maternity leave with pay for women.

It is well established that social protection programmes are among the most effective policy tools in addressing child poverty. However, many countries did not mention social protection in their VNRs as a key approach towards ending poverty for every child, indicating a serious gap in policy responses to protect poor and marginalized children.

### **Improving access, quality, and utilization of public services by the poorest**

Child poverty is multidimensional, and a variety of social services are crucial to support children’s survival, development, and growth. In addition to social assistance measures, several countries noted the policies and programmes they have implemented to strengthen access to education, health and other key social services:



- **Antigua and Barbuda** have increased their budget allocation in recent years for its multidimensional approach to poverty eradication, targeting vulnerable groups such as children, women, girls and the elderly. Resources are mobilized to invest in access to health care, education and lifelong learning, and social housing etc. In 2020, Antigua and Barbuda promulgated its Social Protection Act to provide a more robust institutional and administrative framework to guarantee the effective delivery of public services.
- **Bhutan** noted that children in the country are especially vulnerable to poverty, with multidimensional poverty highest for children aged 0 to 9 years. The government aims to reduce the multidimensionally poor population to less than 5.8 percent in its 12th Five Year Plan. The Five-Year plan allocates 11 percent of its budget for the provision of free access to health and education.
- **China** also adopted similar measures. The government has been improving public services in poverty-stricken areas since 2013. Specifically, a total of 108,000 compulsory education schools in poor areas have been renovated, ensuring all school-age children in poor areas have access to basic education.
- **Nicaragua** noted a social safety net programme, namely the “Love Program for Little Children”, which provides parenting support with 660,187 families receiving home visits annually. Children’s needs and growth up to the age of 4 are monitored through the Control of Surveillance and Promotion of Growth and Development (VPCD).
- **Sierra Leone** continues to roll out the Free Quality School Education

Programme, which includes free meals at primary school, tuition fee grants and the provision of teaching and learning materials. It is found that the increased access to education associated with the reduced household expenditure burden on education directly contributes to reduction in multidimensional child poverty.

## Prioritizing child poverty in national development plans and strategies

Including child poverty in key national development frameworks, such as in a national development plan or a poverty reduction strategy, demonstrates high-level political commitment at the national level, laying the groundwork for increased and more coordinated actions to combat child poverty, and funding to ensure implementation. Among the countries which noted specific frameworks to address child poverty:

- As mentioned above, guided by the “Act on the Promotion of Policy on Child Poverty”, **Japan** formulated the “General Principles of Policy on Child Poverty”, which stipulates the basic policy on measures to cope with child poverty, indicators on child poverty, priority measures to improve the indicators, surveys, and research on child poverty, and a system to promote these measures. Comprehensive interventions are taken from the period of birth to the social independence of children, to break the cycle of poverty. Vulnerable children and families that are difficult to reach are to be detected and supported at an early stage.
- Following the National Strategy to Reduce Child Poverty (2015-2017), **Norway** adopted the Strategy for Children and Youth in Low-Income Families (2020-2023). Key measures include increased universal

child benefits, national grant schemes for the inclusion of children in holiday activities, discount schemes and free care for kindergarten children from low-income families etc. It is worth noting that the report also discussed the challenge of increased poverty among children with immigrant backgrounds.

- **Spain** adopted the prevention and fight against poverty in the Action Plan for the Sustainable Development Strategy (2019-2023). The Action Plan is structured with four strategic goals, 13 objectives and 85 lines of action that pay special attention to the fight against child poverty and cover areas such as income guarantee, equitable and inclusive education, training and employment, housing, social services and dependency and health support to families, etc.

- **Zimbabwe** launched the National Development Strategy 1: 2021-2025 (NDS1) to reduce extreme poverty and improve access to basic social services for vulnerable groups such as children. Food assistance, social cash transfers, health assistance and school meals are provided. As of 2021, 1,406,875 orphans and vulnerable children have been assisted with educational support.

However, despite the increase in the number of countries that discussed child poverty-related policies and programmes in their VNRs, coordinated and comprehensive national plans to reduce child poverty were largely absent in all but the four countries (Japan, Norway, Spain and Zimbabwe) listed above.

## 6. COVID-19 AND CHILD POVERTY

The economic crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic has hit children and their families hard. Save the Children and UNICEF estimate that more than 142 million additional children were pushed into monetary poverty by the end of 2020, because of the pandemic<sup>4</sup>. The percentage of children living in multidimensional poverty - without access to education, health, housing, nutrition, sanitation, or water - was also projected to have increased by 15% by end of 2020<sup>5</sup>. Without urgent socio-economic responses, the pandemic further risks threatening decades of poverty reduction and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. To protect children from the lifelong impact of

poverty, immediate and at-scale actions to expand social protection programmes, including [cash benefits](#) and [family friendly policies](#) (including paid parental leave and access to quality early childhood care, among others), and the provision of access to critical essential services, like healthcare, nutrition and education, is critical. It is also crucial to gear these actions towards sustained efforts to build child-sensitive and inclusive social protection systems.

Among the 40 VNRs reports reviewed, most countries highlighted the impact of the pandemic on public health, societies and economies as well as on the VNR reporting process itself. Countries also discussed their

4 <https://data.unicef.org/resources/children-in-monetary-poor-households-and-covid-19/>

5 <https://data.unicef.org/resources/impact-of-covid-19-on-multidimensional-child-poverty/>



health and socio-economic responses to the crisis, including social protection measures which ranged from unemployment benefits to cash assistance. Yet, a focus on children living in poverty were largely missing from the COVID-19 analyses of the VNR reports. However, some positive examples include:

- **Cabo Verde** authorities adopted a package of additional measures aimed at poor families, which included the extension of the Social Inclusion Income to poor families with children under 15, eligible under the Single Social Registry.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2018 earthquake, **Indonesia** has been collaborating with UNICEF to implement the Emergency Cash Based Assistance (CBA) programme for children affected by disasters. It aims to meet the basic needs of affected families with children up to six or seven years of age, pregnant women and breastfeeding women.
- **Paraguay** observed that the age group most affected by the pandemic of

monetary poverty is those under 15 years of age. The Ministry of Children and Adolescents (MINNA) quickly implemented various responses to the health emergency. Some of these actions included the provision of hygiene kits for each family unit and the distribution of food kits. More than 50% of the beneficiaries are children and adolescents.

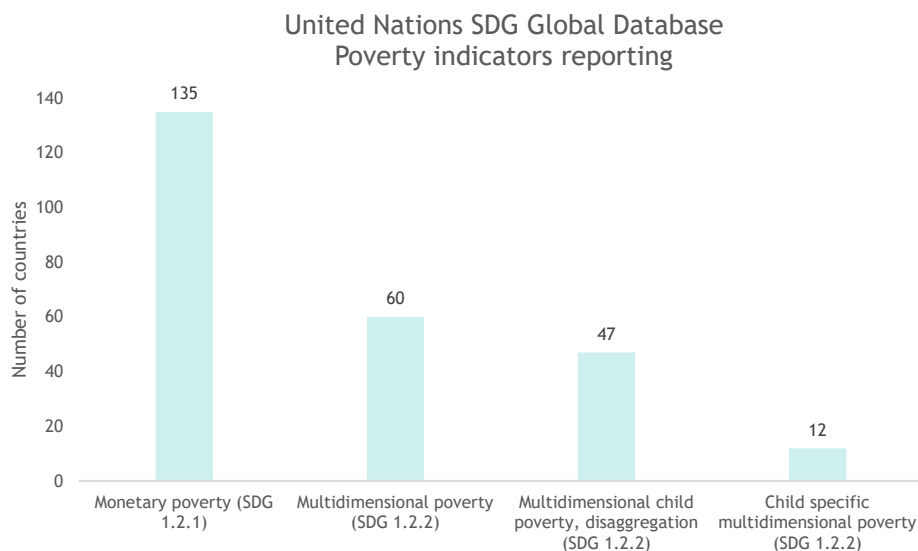
- To mitigate the impacts and cushion the shock of the pandemic in **Tunisia**, a project of “Investing in the human capital of children through a sustainable and inclusive social protection system” was launched to supplement and improve the existing social protection schemes by setting up additional monetary allowances for children. The establishment of a universal allowance in Tunisia as part of the reform of the social protection floor is under consideration, which will target specific groups of children (children 0-5 and children 6-18) living in low-income families and at risk of falling into poverty due to the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 7. THE SDG GLOBAL DATABASE AND REGIONAL COMMITMENTS

The VNRs presented at the HLPF are the most official global tool for countries to report on their progress in achieving the SDGs. However, there are various official databases where countries can input their SDG-related data. For example, the United Nations SDG Global Database (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/UNSDG/IndDatabasePage>) provides access to data on more than 210 SDG indicators, including the poverty-related SDG indicators, for countries across the globe.

Analysis of the SDG 1-related poverty indicators highlight according to the SDG database (as of October 2021), 135 countries have reported on monetary poverty (SDG 1.2.1), 60 countries have reported on multidimensional poverty (SDG 1.2.2), 47 countries have reported on multidimensional child poverty (SDG 1.2.2 disaggregated by child population) and only 12 countries have reported on child-specific multidimensional poverty (SDG 1.2.2).

**Figure 6**



There are considerable regional differences in the reporting of indicators. For SDG 1.2.2 on multidimensional poverty, the majority (25 countries) are from the European region, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean region (10 countries). For the disaggregation of SDG indicator 1.2.2 by age, the majority by far (25 countries) are from the European region. In short, all the European countries provided age disaggregation of their multidimensional poverty measure. This is followed by a critical mass from the Latin America and Caribbean region where all (Panama, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Chile) provided disaggregation by age of their national multidimensional poverty rates. From the South Asia region, three countries included such age disaggregation (Afghanistan, Nepal and Maldives), and one country each from the following regions: Central Asia region (Armenia), East Asia and Pacific Region (Thailand), Eastern and Southern Africa region (Angola), Middle East and North Africa (Morocco) and from the Western and Central Africa region (Mali).

The 12 countries which report on child-specific multidimensional poverty (where the child is the unit of analysis, not the household) are all from four regions: most of them from the West and Central Africa region (Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, São Tomé and Príncipe) and the Eastern and Southern Africa region (Angola, Burundi, Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia), followed by the Middle East and North Africa region (Algeria and Egypt) and one country from the Central Europe region (Armenia).

Unfortunately, the UN SDG Global Database does not include disaggregation of SDG indicator 1.2.1 on the proportion of the population living below the national poverty line, which calls for disaggregation by both sex and age. The Coalition strongly advocates and calls upon the UN Member States to ensure that indicator 1.2.1 is disaggregated by age in the UN SDG Global Database.

The same applies for indicator 1.1.1 on the 'Proportion of population below the international poverty line by sex,





age, employment status and geographic location (urban/rural)'. Six years into the implementation of the SDGs, with only nine years remaining, it is time to follow up on SDG commitments and provide this crucial data disaggregation for children.

It is also worth noting the various regional commitments to addressing child poverty, and the importance of routine measurement and reporting on these. For example, the European Union recommendation on investing

in children has an agreed list of key indicators to monitor these investments (access to adequate resources, access to affordable quality services and children's right to participate)<sup>6</sup>. The recently adopted EU child guarantee aims to ensure that every child in Europe at risk of poverty and social exclusion has access to the most basic of rights like healthcare and education, and it is key that these important commitments are measured and routinely tracked.

## 8. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

With the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on child poverty expected to be severe and long term, achieving the SDG 1 target to end extreme poverty for every child, and halving child poverty in all its dimensions as nationally defined, will require urgent and sustained efforts. The task is ambitious, but achievable.

This year, out of the 40 VNR reports, the number of countries reporting on monetary and multidimensional child poverty rates was only 14 and 5 countries respectively. On the positive side, 31 countries mentioned a variety of efforts to address child poverty, through policies, programmes and budgets.

The Global Coalition to End Child Poverty congratulates these countries and is happy to showcase the good and innovative practices in this brief. However, the overall analysis and numbers represent a dire picture in terms of the measurement and reporting of multidimensional child poverty, unfortunately not much different to reports submitted in previous years. Also, it should be noted that children remain largely invisible in measures

responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. We must recognize that ending the persistence of poverty starts with addressing child poverty in all countries. To do this effectively, governments must routinely measure multidimensional child poverty, develop policies that address it, monitor these policies, and report on their progress through VNRs and other avenues. Without transparent and accessible measurements of child poverty, civil society and other stakeholders are not able to hold governments to account on SDG progress to end child poverty.

As of October 2021, the following 37 countries have committed to submitting their VNRs in 2022, most of which will report for the second or third time on their SDG progress. This is an opportunity for countries to highlight and implement measures to monitor child poverty in all its dimensions, as well as lay out clear roadmaps in achieving the SDG target of ending child poverty.

---

6 <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/employment-and-social-inclusion-indicators/social-protection-and-inclusion/investing-children>

Andorra*	Argentina**	Belarus*	Botswana*	Cameroon*	Comoros	Côte d'Ivoire*
Djibouti	Equatorial Guinea	Eritrea	Eswatini*	Ethiopia*	Gabon	Gambia (Republic of The)*
Ghana*	Greece*	Guinea-Bissau	Italy*	Jamaica*	Jordan*	Kazakhstan*
Latvia*	Liberia*	Mali*	Montenegro*	Netherlands*	Luxembourg*	Pakistan*
Philippines**	São Tomé and Príncipe	Senegal*	Sri Lanka*	Sudan*	Suriname	Switzerland**
Togo***	Tuvalu					

\*Presenting for the second time

\*\*Presenting for the third time

\*\*\*Presenting for the fourth time

The Coalition hopes to see the numbers improve as we move to the second year of the Decade of Action in 2022 and stands ready to support countries as they start their VNR preparation process.

## Global Coalition to End Child Poverty key asks:

### 1. Reporting on SDG 1 child poverty indicators to establish baseline, monitor progress and guide policies

As Member States participating in the 2022 VNR prepare their reports, the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty encourages all countries to use this opportunity to take stock of actions taken to lift children out of poverty in all its dimensions, and report on the baseline and progress towards the child poverty-related SDG indicators, in particular:

- 1.1.1. Proportion of population below the international poverty line, disaggregated by children (ages 0-17 years).

- 1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, disaggregated by children (ages 0-17 years).
- 1.2.2 Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

Measuring poverty in early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence is critical for enabling countries to take the appropriate policy actions to address poverty at different stages of children's lives. Therefore, whenever possible, these indicators should be disaggregated by specific age groups (e.g. 0-5, 6-12, 13-17 years old). The different components of multidimensional child poverty data should also be unpacked and analyzed, to understand better how it needs to be addressed in national contexts.

It is important to track not just national averages, but to disaggregate where possible (for instance, by age, sex, disability status, subnational, urban/rural, intra-urban etc.)

and analyze the pace at which gaps between socioeconomic groups in society are changing (or not) over time. Countries should adopt national interim equity targets to track progress among different social and economic groups<sup>7</sup>. Survey and other data should be used to report regularly and transparently on inequality and gaps in progress among the poorest and most marginalized groups, including children and families living in poverty.

## 2. Comprehensive national agenda to reach the SDG child poverty targets

**Measurement alone will not end child poverty.** Once targets for reducing and eradicating child poverty have been set, these need to be followed through with strategies, policies, programmes and budgets to support families and children living in poverty. The importance of a comprehensive national strategy to end child poverty is more critical than ever, as almost everywhere the number of children living in poverty is projected to increase dramatically due to the COVID-19 crisis. The impacts of the pandemic are also being experienced differently among girls and boys, with girls and women particularly vulnerable to increased violence, abuse and increased care and domestic work burdens. Only through strong social protection systems and coordinated and comprehensive actions, rather than fragmented and temporary measures, can we avoid failing an entire future generation and achieve the SDG 1 target of ending extreme child poverty in the next ten years.

Therefore, we are calling on governments and actors involved in poverty eradication efforts to put children first in their national development plans, strengthen social

protection systems (including gender and disability-inclusive social protection) and basic services, and report on the related SDG 1 indicators.

- 1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable.
- 1.4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services
- 1.A.1 Proportion of resources allocated by the government directly to poverty reduction programmes
- 1.B.1 Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups.

## 3. Participation of non-state stakeholders, including individuals living in poverty

The 2030 Agenda should not only focus on member states or the UN. The 2030 Agenda specifies that Member States should “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led, and country driven.” Furthermore, the agenda states that review processes “will be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and will support the reporting by all relevant stakeholders” and “they will be people-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and have a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind”.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/leaving-no-one-behind-embedding-equity-post-2015-framework-through-stepping-stone-targets>

<sup>8</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

**The Coalition urges all countries to ensure that the VNR process has the attention, the engagement and the input of non-state stakeholders, the poorest and most vulnerable groups, including children.**

Agenda 2030 explicitly recognizes children as agents of change. Non-state actors, such as civil society and donors, do have a role to play in monitoring progress and ensuring that Member States are putting in place strategies, policies and programmes to address child poverty. Innovative national strategies to measure and address child poverty

A range of innovative and powerful examples have been summarized in this report, based on the analysis of the 2021 VNRs. These examples showcase how individual countries have strengthened their focus on the various

dimensions of child poverty and addressed the impacts of COVID-19 on child poverty in all its forms.

The Coalition encourages Governments to share their experiences of innovations and new strategies to address child poverty with the global community. To help with this, the Coalition can act as a platform to facilitate inter-country exchanges in this area, for instance through Coalition-hosted Webinars. Coalition members, who encompass a broad base of civil society, development practitioners and researchers, would also be grateful to learn about innovative policies to enable the analysis of case studies of successful child poverty reduction, in blogs and publications.



## 9. ANNEX 1 - COUNTRIES REPORTING ON CHILD POVERTY IN THEIR VNRS (2017-2021)

\*Red circle indicates NO, Green circle indicates YES

Country	VNR (latest available)	Overall monetary poverty rate reported?	Monetary child poverty reported?	Overall multidimensional poverty rate reported?	Multidimensional child poverty rate reported?
Afghanistan	2021	●	●	●	●
Albania	2018	●	●	●	●
Algeria	2019	●	●	●	●
Andorra	2018	●	●	●	●
Angola	2021	●	●	●	●
Antigua and Barbuda	2021	●	●	●	●
Argentina	2020	●	●	●	●
Armenia	2020	●	●	●	●
Australia	2018	●	●	●	●
Austria	2020	●	●	●	●
Azerbaijan	2021	●	●	●	●
Bahamas	2018	●	●	●	●
Bahrain	2018	●	●	●	●
Bangladesh	2020	●	●	●	●
Belarus	2017	●	●	●	●
Belgium	2017	●	●	●	●
Belize	2017	●	●	●	●
Benin	2020	●	●	●	●
Bhutan	2021	●	●	●	●
Bolivia	2021	●	●	●	●
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2019	●	●	●	●
Botswana	2017	●	●	●	●
Brazil	2017	●	●	●	●
Brunei Darussalam	2020	●	●	●	●
Bulgaria	2020	●	●	●	●
Burkina Faso	2019	●	●	●	●
Burundi	2020	●	●	●	●
Cabo Verde	2021	●	●	●	●
Cambodia	2019	●	●	●	●
Cameroon	2019	●	●	●	●
Canada	2018	●	●	●	●
Central African Republic	2019	●	●	●	●
Chad	2021	●	●	●	●
Chile	2019	●	●	●	●
China	2021	●	●	●	●
Colombia	2021	●	●	●	●
Comoros	2020	●	●	●	●
Congo	2019	●	●	●	●
Costa Rica	2020	●	●	●	●
Cote d'Ivoire	2019	●	●	●	●
Croatia	2019	●	●	●	●
Cuba	2021	●	●	●	●
Cyprus	2021	●	●	●	●
Czech Republic	2021	●	●	●	●
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	2021	●	●	●	●
Democratic Republic of Congo	2020	●	●	●	●

Voluntary National Reviews for the Sustainable Development Goals: Are countries committed to ending child poverty by 2030?  
 A review of VNR reports from 2017 to 2021









































Denmark	2021	●	●	●	●
Dominican Republic	2021	●	●	●	●
Ecuador	2020	●	●	●	●
Egypt	2021	●	●	●	●
El Salvador	2017	●	●	●	●
Estonia	2020	●	●	●	●
Eswatini	2019	●	●	●	●
Ethiopia	2017	●	●	●	●
Fiji	2019	●	●	●	●
Finland	2020	●	●	●	●
Gambia	2020	●	●	●	●
Georgia	2020	●	●	●	●
Germany	2021	●	●	●	●
Ghana	2019	●	●	●	●
Greece	2018	●	●	●	●
Guatemala	2019	●	●	●	●
Guinea	2018	●	●	●	●
Guyana	2019	●	●	●	●
Honduras	2020	●	●	●	●
Hungary	2018	●	●	●	●
Iceland	2019	●	●	●	●
India	2020	●	●	●	●
Indonesia	2021	●	●	●	●
Iraq	2021	●	●	●	●
Ireland	2018	●	●	●	●
Israel	2019	●	●	●	●
Italy	2017	●	●	●	●
Jamaica	2018	●	●	●	●
Japan	2021	●	●	●	●
Jordan	2017	●	●	●	●
Kazakhstan	2019	●	●	●	●
Kenya	2020	●	●	●	●
Kuwait	2019	●	●	●	●
Kyrgyz Republic	2020	●	●	●	●
Lao People's Democratic Republic	2021	●	●	●	●
Latvia	2018	●	●	●	●
Lebanon	2018	●	●	●	●
Lesotho	2019	●	●	●	●
Liberia	2020	●	●	●	●
Libya	2020	●	●	●	●
Liechtenstein	2019	●	●	●	●
Lithuania	2018	●	●	●	●
Luxembourg	2017	●	●	●	●
Madagascar	2021	●	●	●	●
Malawi	2020	●	●	●	●
Malaysia	2021	●	●	●	●
Maldives	2017	●	●	●	●
Mali	2018	●	●	●	●
Malta	2018	●	●	●	●
Marshall Islands	2021	●	●	●	●
Mauritania	2019	●	●	●	●
Mauritius	2019	●	●	●	●
Mexico	2021	●	●	●	●
Micronesia	2020	●	●	●	●
Monaco	2017	●	●	●	●
Mongolia	2019	●	●	●	●



Voluntary National Reviews for the Sustainable Development Goals: Are countries committed to ending child poverty by 2030?  
 A review of VNR reports from 2017 to 2021

Morocco	2020	●	●	●	●
Mozambique	2020	●	●	●	●
Namibia	2021	●	●	●	●
Nepal	2020	●	●	●	●
Netherlands	2017	●	●	●	●
New Zealand	2019	●	●	●	●
Nicaragua	2021	●	●	●	●
Niger	2021	●	●	●	●
Nigeria	2020	●	●	●	●
North Macedonia	2020	●	●	●	●
Norway	2021	●	●	●	●
Oman	2019	●	●	●	●
Pakistan	2019	●	●	●	●
Palau	2019	●	●	●	●
Panama	2020	●	●	●	●
Papua New Guinea	2020	●	●	●	●
Paraguay	2021	●	●	●	●
Peru	2020	●	●	●	●
Philippines	2019	●	●	●	●
Poland	2018	●	●	●	●
Portugal	2017	●	●	●	●
Qatar	2021	●	●	●	●
Republic of Moldova	2020	●	●	●	●
Romania	2018	●	●	●	●
Russian Federation	2020	●	●	●	●
Rwanda	2019	●	●	●	●
Saint Lucia	2019	●	●	●	●
Samoa	2020	●	●	●	●
San Marino	2021	●	●	●	●
Saudi Arabia	2018	●	●	●	●
Senegal	2018	●	●	●	●
Serbia	2019	●	●	●	●
Seychelles	2020	●	●	●	●
Sierra Leone	2021	●	●	●	●
Singapore	2018	●	●	●	●
Slovakia	2018	●	●	●	●
Slovenia	2020	●	●	●	●
Solomon Islands	2020	●	●	●	●
South Africa	2019	●	●	●	●
Spain	2021	●	●	●	●
Sri Lanka	2018	●	●	●	●
State of Palestine	2018	●	●	●	●
Sudan	2018	●	●	●	●
Sweden	2021	●	●	●	●
Switzerland	2018	●	●	●	●
Syrian Arab Republic	2020	●	●	●	●
Tajikistan	2017	●	●	●	●
Tanzania	2019	●	●	●	●
Thailand	2021	●	●	●	●
Timor-Leste	2019	●	●	●	●
Togo	2018	●	●	●	●
Tonga	2019	●	●	●	●
Trinidad and Tobago	2020	●	●	●	●
Tunisia	2021	●	●	●	●
Turkey	2019	●	●	●	●
Turkmenistan	2019	●	●	●	●

Voluntary National Reviews for the Sustainable Development Goals: Are countries committed to ending child poverty by 2030?  
 A review of VNR reports from 2017 to 2021

Uganda	2020				
Ukraine	2020				
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	2018				
United Kingdom	2019				
Uruguay	2021				
Uzbekistan	2020				
Vanuatu	2019				
Vietnam	2018				
Zambia	2020				
Zimbabwe	2021				
	No	22	118	116	146
	Yes	146	50	52	22





## 10. ANNEX 2 - METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

All VNR reports from 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 available on the [SDG portal](#) were reviewed for this analysis. To identify and quantify references to child poverty, monetary child poverty, multidimensional child poverty, and policies and programmes addressing child poverty, we followed a two-step approach: 1. Reviewing key chapters that discuss poverty and inequality 2. Performing a key word searches to capture mentions of child poverty.

### Identifying countries reporting on monetary and multidimensional child poverty rates

To identify whether countries mentioned, monetary child poverty, or multidimensional child poverty, we reviewed each report's chapters on SDG 1 progress review, SDG 10 progress review, the Leave No One Behind Principle, and Statistical annex. We also

performed keyword searches to capture child poverty rates mentioned elsewhere in the VNRs.

### Assessing reporting on policies and programmes to address child poverty

To determine the number of countries reporting on policies and programmes addressing child poverty, explicit references to policies, legislation, and related efforts to tackle child poverty in the respective VNR reports were considered. Countries that clearly presented information on such policies and efforts that directly addressed child poverty, specifically under the report's chapters on SDG 1 progress review, SDG 10 progress review, and the Leave No One Behind Principle, were categorized as including assessments on policies and programmes to reduce child poverty.

### Key words used to capture mentions of child poverty

English	Spanish	Russian	Arabic	French
Child poverty	Pobreza infantil	Детская бедность	لافطألارقف	Pauvreté des enfants
Poverty	Pobreza	Бедность	رقفال	Pauvreté
Multidimensional Poverty Index	Índice de Pobreza Multidimensional	Индекс многомерной бедности	ددعتمرقفالارشؤم داعبأأا	Indice de pauvreté multidimensionnelle
Child	Niño, Niña, Niñez	ребенок	لفط	Enfant
Multidimensional	Multidimensional	Многомерный	داعبأأا ددعتم	Multidimensionnel
Monetary poverty	Pobreza monetaria	Денежная бедность	يدقنلارقفال	Pauvreté monétaire
Poverty line	Línea de pobreza	Черта бедности	رقفالاطخ	

Poverty reduction	Reducción de la pobreza	Сокращение бедности	رقف ل ا ن م د ح ل ا	Réduction de la pauvreté
Deprivation	Privación	Лишение	ن ا م ر ح ل ا	Privation
The situation of children	La situación de los niños/las niñas/la niñez	Положение детей	ل ا ف ط ا ل ا ة ل ا ح	La situation des enfants
Deprivation of children	La privación de los niños/las niñas/niñez/infancia			Privations des enfants
Poverty reduction programmes	Programas de reducción de la pobreza	Программы сокращения бедности		Programmes de réduction de la pauvreté
The incidence of poverty	El índice de pobreza	Уровень бедности	رقف ل ا ر ا ش ت ن ا	L'incidence de la pauvreté
Poverty reduction projects	Proyectos de reducción de la pobreza	Проекты сокращения бедности		Projets de réduction de la pauvreté
Childhood	La infancia/niñez	Детство		

### Limitations of VNR reviews

It is important to note that there are countries which are monitoring, measuring and addressing child poverty through policies and programmes, but who are not reporting

this information in their VNRs. The analysis in this brief is only based on VNR reports and, as highlighted in the Coalition's key asks, sharing a comprehensive overview of child poverty efforts in VNRs strengthens global efforts to fight child poverty and achieve SDG 1.





© UNICEF / UN0420211

# About the Global Coalition to End Child Poverty

The Coalition is a network of like-minded organizations concerned at the devastating effects of poverty in childhood on children and societies. The Coalition promotes the need for countries and development actors to explicitly focus on child poverty and the solutions to it in national, subnational, regional and global policies, budgets and monitoring systems.

Coalition participants share a vision of a world where all children grow up free from poverty, deprivation and exclusion. Working together through the Coalition, as well as independently, Coalition participants aim to support the recognition of child poverty and the practical actions to alleviate it.



**END CHILD  
POVERTY**  
GLOBAL COALITION

